Water pollution in Ganga and Yamuna

1828. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is still water pollution in Ganga and Yamuna despite spending crores of rupees on these projects;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by Government to make these rivers pollution free;

(d) how much has been spent so far;

(e) whether allegations of irregularities and mismanagement have been leveled by C&AG;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if so, the action taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) Conservation of rivers is a dynamic activity with the ever increasing pollution load due to increase in population. Review of the strategies of conservation policy and identification of additional towns and rivers is a continuous process. Water being a State subject, it is the responsibility of State Governments to create proper sewerage infrastructure to prevent pollution from entering the rivers. Central Government only supplements the efforts of the State Government by providing one time grant for capital works for identified polluted stretches of rivers. The National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) presently covers pollution abatement works in the polluted stretches of 35 rivers spread over 164 towns in 20 States in the country at an approved cost of Rs. 4793 crore. Ganga and Yamuna are among the major rivers covered under this Plan. A total of 667 schemes for abatement of pullution in rivers Ganga & Yamuna have been completed so far resulting in creation of 1704 mld (million litres per day) of sewage treatment capacity at an expenditure of Rs. 1431 crores. With the pullution abatement works completed in both the phases under Ganga Action Plan so far, the water quality of the river Ganga has shown improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality. In respect of river Yamuna, the quality of river water has not shown the desired improvement owing to the large gap between the demand and the availability of sewage treatment capacity particularly in Delhi, and the lack of availability of fresh water for ensuring minimum flow in the river.

(e) to (g) The Report for the year ended March 2000 of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (No. 5A of 2000) on a review of the Ganga Action Plan from the 1993 to 2000, contained observations pertaining to delay in execution of works, discontinuation of Water Quality Monitoring, poor Operation and Maintenance (O & M) of assests created under the programme in the States among others. Besides meeting the statutory obligation of providing Action Taken Report to the observations, the Government has taken remedial measures to improve the performance. These measures include strengthening of monitoring of the implementation of works, resumption of water quality monitoring through independent agencies, and requirement of submission of a detailed O & M Plan by the State Governments before sanction of projects.